



national network for immigrant and refugee rights

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The 100 Stories Project

Raise Your Voices, Tell Your Stories—Organize for Justice & Human Rights!

HURRICANE: The Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network

An initiative of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

What is the HURRICANE initiative?

HURRICANE: The Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network is a NNIRR initiative to bring together community members and their organizations to track, document, and seek redress and accountability for human rights violations and abuses committed against immigrant and refugee members of our communities. Hurricane represents a community-based organizing strategy to dialogue and determine how to prevent the rights abuses affecting our communities. Hurricane members will use “Martus,” a database, to document and report abuses and be part of an urgent response network to denounce violations and demand justice. By monitoring and documenting human rights violations, communities can develop a shared analysis of the problems and issues besetting us. Raising self-awareness of our conditions is integral to self-determining our rights. Through this process our communities can envision the changes they want and together decide how to achieve them. This year NNIRR’s Hurricane is launching the annual “100 Stories Project,” with the goal of disseminating at least one hundred stories through interviews from community members affected by human rights abuse and how they responded to seek redress and accountability. We will publish the “100 Stories” in an annual report with recommendations to obtain justice and protect our human rights as part of celebrating International Migrants Day every December 18. You can be part of the 100 Stories Project by joining Hurricane or by sending your stories of abuses and human rights organizing to: lrvivas@nnirr.org & agarcia@nnirr.org.

Why tell our stories? What’s in a story?

Telling our stories is a way of raising our voices to denounce abuses and injustices we experience and witness every day in our lives. It means documenting what happens in our communities to help us determine what changes we want to see. By telling and writing down our stories we document the patterns of abuses perpetrated on members of our communities. Tracking and documenting abuses also helps us to know the living history of our community and to stand up for our rights.

After we tell and document our stories of resistance and abuse, our community must look carefully at what has happened and together begin to decide what to do. We are able to see what our needs and rights are and how we can organize and demand accountability and redress.

We can document and tell our stories by creating our own archives with photographs, newspaper articles, videos, interviews, and cultural expressions. Through this process we can ensure that our stories are not lost in history. By telling our stories, we struggle against the loss of memory. By writing them down and sharing them, we understand that only together we can obtain justice and human rights.

What is documentation and how does it build community power?

Documentation is a process that allows communities to begin to take control of experiences with abuse by speaking out against injustices. But speaking out is not enough; we are challenged to define our rights, which means we are defining how we obtain them and determining our future. When we document violations, we are also challenged to define our rights and to decide how these should be upheld in order to prevent further abuses.

In the context of a hostile political climate toward people of color and immigrant communities, instances of abuse and exploitation become increasingly normalized and endured. The climate of fear, created by punitive immigration policies that further criminalize immigrants and people of color, seeks to silence our voices and coerce us into accepting the violation of our human rights as “normal.” Part of stopping the abuses, means we must record our stories. Engaging in a process of tracking and documenting these abuses, we exercise our rights and demands to study, live, work, play, and worship in safe and healthy communities.

By documenting stories of human rights abuses and rights violations, we demonstrate the impact of current policies and practices on our communities. It becomes a powerful strategy in demanding accountability for rights violations that destabilize and threaten our communities. As we track and monitor abuses, we not only say “No More!” to injustices we experienced yesterday and today, but we also work to prevent such abuses from happening tomorrow.

Why engage in a community documentation process?

Communities have the expertise, through lived experience of struggles and organizing, to be able to determine what our rights are and how these should be upheld. Rather than leave it to lawyers, reporters, academics or researchers to speak for us, engaging in a community documentation process means exercising our right to self-determination.

We determine what changes we want to see, and decide what stories we need to collect in order to show why these changes are needed. By examining together the abuses and rights violations, we develop our own analysis based on patterns and issues that come up through the story-collection process. The stories and analysis then forms the basis for defining and demanding our rights and organizing and fighting for justice and human rights.

What is “Martus”?

The Martus program is a user-friendly database designed to store and retrieve information about human rights abuses in an efficient and secure way. Martus was developed by Benetech, an organization that specializes in developing technology to support human rights documentation. “Martus” is the Greek word for witness, which symbolizes the power of documenting abuses and rights violations. The power of witnessing allows communities to offer testimony about the realities that we experience and endure in our daily lives.

Why use Martus as part of community documentation of human rights violations?

The Martus program is a tool to help community groups take charge of monitoring and documenting human rights abuses that we experience and witness. Building community power through witnessing and monitoring documentation and examining them together involves:

- 1) Defining and understanding our rights;
- 2) Documenting how these are violated;
- 3) Determining the changes we need to see, and;
- 4) Deciding HOW we will go about achieving these changes.

The Martus database allows us to enter, store, and easily retrieve information about the abuses and rights violations perpetrated on members of our communities who come forward to tell their stories. It allows us to enter confidential information in a safe and secure way. With Martus, we are able to create our own infrastructure of information to amplify our demands for justice.

When someone comes forward to talk about their experience with abuse, they are participating in an act of resistance. Using Martus to record these instances is a powerful form of collective resistance against the loss of memory, and the pressure to accept violence as a part of our daily lives.

Installing “Martus”

The application is easily downloadable in one of two ways:

- 1) CD format, or;
- 2) Directly from the website: www.martus.org. Go to “Download Martus Now”, select platform (Windows or Mac), and select “single file with Java”.
Once it is downloaded, it is as easy to use as an email program.

With Martus, you can create bulletins that contain information about the type of abuse, perpetrator, and details about the person(s) affected. This information can be kept private, and is backed up to a secure server. Make sure to download the latest version: Martus 3.2. It is recommended to run Martus 3.2 on Windows 2000/XP and Mac OSX.

Voila! Once you see the Martus icon open on your screen, you are ready to start using the program. All the personal information you enter during the sign-in process is protected and encrypted. This means it shows up in codes and is nearly impossible to access by hackers or the FBI.

For more details on how to download, see instructions on website or CD insert.

Getting Started¹

Once you have downloaded Martus successfully, you will see the “Martus SignIn” screen. To set up your account, enter a username and password. Please memorize them or store them in a secure place – preferably not on your computer! **Important:** Follow the instructions to back-up your file-key (username & password). If you happen to forget your password, you will be unable to access any of your information entered in the database.

In order to back up your information to the server and share your bulletins with NNIRR/Hurricane, you need to follow these simple steps.

Connecting to the Martus server:

1. Go to Server > Select Martus server
2. Enter username & password as prompted
3. Enter the IP address & public ID code included with the Martus CD [or see attachment: “NNIRR magic word_public codes”]

¹ Also see the Martus 3.2 Quick Start Guide, which shows you ‘screenshots’ of what you will see on the screen at each step of the way (download from website, www.martus.org/downloads). This file is also part of the download. Look in your harddrive for the Martus Client 3.2 folder > Martus> Docs > quickstartguide.pdf.

Connecting to the NNIRR Headquarter Account:

- 1) First, save the ‘NNIRR Hurricane.mpi’ file onto your desktop [NNIRR will provide this file to you].
- 2) Sign on to Martus
- 3) Go to Tools > Configure Headquarters
- 4) Enter your username and password in the Martus Signin dialog box. Click Add.
- 5) Select the ‘NNIRR Hurricane.mpi’ file from your desktop.
- 6) Enter the public code given to you by NNIRR [Starts with 6416].
- 7) Click Yes to confirm that you want to grant this Headquarter account access to your public and private data.
- 8) Enter a label for the HQ account. The HQ label may be the name of the person or organization. You can change the label later if you wish. Only you will see the label you assign; others who view the bulletin will not see the label, for security reasons.
- 9) Check the default box if you would like to share all new bulletins (and new versions of old bulletins) with this account by default. You can still deny access to individual bulletins as you create them. See “Headquarters” section in the User Guide “4a. Completing fields in a bulletin” for more info).
- 10) Click Save.

To access NNIRR’s customized bulletin:

- 1) Save ‘NNIRR Hurricane_eng_revised.mct’ file onto your desktop [NNIRR will provide this file].
- 2) Open Martus and go to Options > Customize Fields, and click ‘Yes’.
- 3) At the bottom of the screen, select ‘Import template’. Find the ‘NNIRR Hurricane_eng_revised.mct’ file on your desktop and select.
- 4) Click ‘Ok’ and return to the main window. Go to ‘Create’ and you will now see the customized bulletin developed by NNIRR.

If you would like to access the database in Spanish:

- 1) Go to Options > Preferences, and select Spanish. Click ‘ok’. [Make sure you have saved the ‘NNIRR Hurricane_esp.mct’ file on your desktop]
- 2) Go to Options > Customize Fields, and click ‘Yes’.
- 3) Select ‘Import Template.’ Find the ‘NNIRR Hurricane_esp.mct’ file on your desktop and select.
- 4) Return to the main window. Go to ‘Create’ and you will now see NNIRR’s customized bulletin in Spanish.
[For more detailed instructions, see section ‘10c: Using Customization Templates’ on pgs.51-52 of the Martus User Guide.]

To join Hurricane or to contribute to the 100 Stories Project, contact:

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